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Preface

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Preface

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On the 19th–20th October 2013 the Slavic Department of the University of Zürich hosted a conference under the heading “*Ain’t misbehavin’ – Implicit and explicit strategies in Eastern European political discourse*” which brought together twelve specialists from nine countries. The main stimulus for this initiative originated from the awareness that a quarter of a century after the fall of the socialist system in Eastern Europe, time had come to reassess political discourse in the newly arisen democracies from a comparative pragmatic perspective: to what extent do the most salient communicative strategies in different post-socialist countries diverge today, how deeply are these divergences rooted in pre-socialist cultural traditions and/or different political systems? Do they still share any characteristics that separate them from Central or Western Europe, or has the overwhelming impact of globalisation eliminated the last traces of the socialist past?

By publishing the present volume, we do not claim to provide full-fledged answers to all these questions but to elucidate at least some relevant issues related to them. The volume presents nine contributions based on the papers held at the conference. They cover four Eastern European countries: Russia, Poland, Czechia and Romania. The inclusion of Romania in a special issue of a journal of Slavic studies might at the first sight call for an explanation; however, the different genetic affiliations of the languages under examination have no bearing on the characteristics of political discourse to be described here and their possible roots in the common socialist past. The scrutiny of parliamentary debates dominates in five papers, the remaining ones encompass other genres, such as televised political interviews, press commentaries, and computer-mediated communication (blogs and Twitter hashtags). Several authors adopted a neo-Gricean approach combined with relevance theory, discourse analysis or impoliteness theory, others resorted to cognitive semantics and humour theory. The topics range from rhetorical questions to linguistic violence to blends as catchwords and to negation in the co-construction of political identity. Four papers by M. Berrocal, C. Ilie & A. Ștefănescu, M. Sivenkova and D. Weiss focus on the typology and functional analysis of intertextuality in political discourse, exploring such diverse aspects as the role of historical reminiscences, quotations as a vehicle of meta-

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phor-driven argumentation or face threatening acts, salient culture- and genre-related differences in using prior texts, etc. Thus, by offering a manifold comparative perspective across different countries and genres, this volume may be considered a first step to fill the gap in comparative research on political discourse in the post-socialist part of Europe.